3: Wallace & Hoebel E-4, 5 (1933, 1945) 1952
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on the march, unless menstruating, when he carried it himself. In fact, however, plural wives tended to reduce the domestic drudgery of all through a sharing of labor.

A man with only two or three wives and not too many children kept them all in one tipi. An important man's wives ordinarily lived apart, however, each woman having her own tent for herself and her children. Among the poorer families when wives were sisters, they sometimes used only the one tipi and possibly one bed for a time, but they always constructed separate tipis as soon as possible.[20] The opening of these tents was on the main tipi which was occupied by the husband. Long buckskin strings, attached to the buffalo mattress of each woman, were laid under the fold of the tent into the tipi of the husband so that he could instantly summon any one of his wives.

Comanche women were not very prolific, and death of the mother at childbirth was not uncommon.[21] The average birth rate seems scarcely to have exceeded two children to each woman, and it was a rare case when there were more than three or four born to one woman. Births were far apart, and the newborn were usually small. Many women were barren. Contraceptives were unknown to the Comanches, but abortions were practiced by beating the belly with stones. Hard physical work and constant horseback riding also apparently induced abortions so early in pregnancy that they went unnoticed.

Giving birth to a child was ordinarily a simple affair. Cases have been reported of women on the trail dropping behind the group, giving birth to their children, and then after a few hours rejoining the group on the march.[22] Under normal conditions, however, natal preparations were made. If a woman had her own tipi, she might use it; but if it was used by other members of the family, a separate lodge was constructed. In the summer it would be of brush about eight feet in diameter and six or seven feet high. Inside the lodge the earth

[20] Informant: See How Deep the Water Is.

[21] R. N. Richardson, "The Culture of the Comanche Indians," Texas Archeological and Paleontological Society *Bulletin*, I (1929), 63.

[22] Burnet, "The Comanches and Other Tribes of Texas and the Policy to Be Pursued Respecting Them," *loc. cit.*, 234; Humfreville, *Twenty Years among Our Hostile Indians*, 182.